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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NEW DELHI 006308

SIPDIS

NSC FOR KURT AMEND

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TAGS: [PREL](#), [EAID](#), [KDEM](#), [IN](#), [AF](#)

SUBJECT: INDIA READY TO WORK WITH US ON AFGHAN PARLIAMENT,
DEMOCRACY

REF: NEW DELHI 5446

Classified By: PolCouns Geoff Pyatt for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

1. (C) India stands ready to provide any assistance Afghanistan requests for elections and Parliamentary training, MEA Joint Secretary (Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran) Dilip Sinha told PolCouns on August 12. The Prime Minister will lay the cornerstone of the Indian-constructed Parliament building during his visit to Kabul tentatively scheduled for August 28-29, and 30 Afghan Parliament Secretariat employees are currently in New Delhi taking training at India's Bureau of Parliamentary Affairs. Sinha noted the GOI will run courses not only for secretariat employees, but also for new MPs coming from a wide variety of backgrounds, and welcomed the prospect of partnering with US or other donors to make these courses for Afghan Members of Parliament more useful.

2. (SBU) The GOI is moving ahead with plans for a vocational training program (reftel), Sinha reported, and the US, the UN Development Program, or any other international donor could fund supplies and training for this project once India kicks it off. Sinha welcomed any other USG suggestions for cooperative projects, either under the US-India Democracy Initiative or otherwise.

Status of Indian Projects

3. (C) Sinha provided further detail on the status of several Indian reconstruction projects. The contract for the Salma dam construction has just been awarded to the contractor KEC. However, construction on the Zaranj-Delaram road has slipped due to Iranian foot-dragging on providing supplies and materials for the road construction. The new completion target is December 2007, delayed from March 2007.

4. (C) MEA recently signed a contract with PowerGrid, the contractor for the Kabul to Pul-i-Khumri power transmission line, to open its office in Kabul and begin work there. While New Delhi's repeated requests to Pakistan for land transit rights for reconstruction supplies have fallen on deaf ears, Sinha reported a shift in Indian tactics: as the Pul-i-Khumri project requires supplies, the GOI will make individual requests to Pakistan to allow the transport of specified equipment by land, since the items are going to get to Afghanistan one way or another.

5. (U) India has also completed reconstructing the Habibia school, Sinha reported, despite delays in transporting the bulk of the furniture by sea and land to avoid Pakistan. India even resorted to flying in at great expense a bare-bones set of furnishings to allow classes to start. As a promising symbol of US-India cooperation in Afghanistan, the Indian contractors refurbishing the school repaired a commemorative plaque placed at the school in 1954 to mark a previous American-provided renovation, and added reference to the current Indian role.

Comment: We Need to Start Working Out Ideas

6. (C) The UN Democracy Fund kickoff in New York and Parliamentary elections in Afghanistan, both coming in September, will be significant and high-visibility opportunities to showcase our partnership in reconstruction in Afghanistan and the US-India Democracy Initiative. We should quickly work out concrete proposals for collaboration, such as joint training of parliamentarians or stationing of Indian technical experts with PRTs, to have something to show by the time of these events. India is ready and willing to work with us on the long term task of building democracy in Afghanistan. We should make the most of it.

MINIMIZE CONSIDERED.

BLAKE